

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

April 17, 2020

The Honorable Wilbur Ross
Secretary
U.S. Department of Commerce
1401 Constitution Ave. NW
Washington, D.C. 20230

Dear Secretary Ross:

We write to urge you to quickly implement the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES Act), which provides \$300 million for fishery participants facing unique and harsh effects due to the coronavirus pandemic. Furthermore, we ask that you work closely with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and applicable stakeholders to swiftly provide this aid to America's impacted constituents and fishery communities.

Commercial and recreational fisheries in the U.S. generate over \$200 billion in sales and 1.7 million jobs, but due to the Coronavirus crisis, fisheries dependent businesses and regions are facing extreme economic hardship from lack of available markets. These impacts are felt throughout the industry, from recreational fishing businesses, Native American Tribes, retailers, seafood supply chains, processors, and fishing crews. With the U.S. having a rich fishing culture, both commercial and recreational, the economic losses threaten the future viability of fishery infrastructure. The coronavirus pandemic has decreased demand for seafood across the U.S. supply chain, from luxury items such as oysters and crabs, generally consumed at restaurants, to grocery mainstays sourced from many Virginia fisheries. Moreover, the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries has closed its offices to walk-in traffic and made other changes due to the ongoing coronavirus situation. As a result of those changes, fishing educational classes have been postponed, threatening the next generation of angler's experience.

We urge you to work quickly to ensure that fishery participants and the communities they support see this aid as soon as possible. Monetary relief is critical now to ensure the future of our coastal economies and our fishing industry.

Thank you for your diligent work during this pandemic.

Sincerely,



Robert J. Wittman
Member of Congress



Robert C. "Bobby" Scott
Member of Congress



Elaine G. Luria
Member of Congress